

Energy & Commerce
Health Subcommittee Legislative Hearing
Legislative Solutions to Bolster Preparedness and Response
for All Hazards and Public Health Security Threats
June 13, 2023
As Prepared for Delivery

OPENING STATEMENT

Today we are considering several pieces of legislation critical to our national public health security. This conversation could not come at a more pressing or relevant time.

America is facing public health security threats on many fronts.

For example ...

- A recent State Department report confirmed North Korea continues to develop genetically engineered biological weapons, including bacteria, viruses and toxins.¹
- According to one report, nearly 60 million patient records were compromised last year through over 900 data breach incidents.²
- And we continue to learn lessons from the unprecedented COVID-19 worldwide pandemic.

We must be prepared for and ready to respond to these threats – chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or cyberattack – by taking an all-hazards and threat-agnostic approach.

¹ North Korea genetically engineering biological weapons for military use: US, April 19, 2023, <https://www.nknews.org/2023/04/north-korea-genetically-engineering-biological-weapons-for-military-use-us/>.

² Protenus Breach Barometer Report, What Impact are Healthcare Data Breaches Having on Your Organization?, <https://www.protenus.com/breach-barometer-report>.

That is the focus of the solutions we are considering today that Mr. Guthrie discussed in detail.

Supply Chain

I understand some of my Democratic colleagues are upset we are not considering legislation today related to drug shortages and larger supply chain issues.

I will say to them – I welcome that discussion.

Just last week, the FDA announced that more than 130 drugs were in short supply, 14 of which are cancer treatments.

Clearly, this must be addressed.

A few weeks ago, the Oversight Subcommittee held a hearing on this exact topic.

And just yesterday, Senate Finance Ranking Member Crapo and I released a public Request for Information to solicit information and ideas on the underlying economic causes of drug shortages, the potential role of federal programs in contributing to drug shortage, and possible solutions.

Finding solutions for drug shortages are broader than this reauthorization and FDA, and outside the scope of this preparedness reauthorization.

I welcome my Democratic colleagues to work with us in this effort...

...and remind them that the focus of today's legislative hearing is on ensuring we reauthorize immediate preparedness and response programs.

Closing

For many of these threats—from catastrophic natural disaster to a biological threat to cyberattack, the question is not *if*, but *when*.

I thank the many members for their hard work on the reforms we are considering today.

I am especially appreciative of Congressman Hudson's leadership to provide the framework for these discussions and commend him and his team for all their hard work.

I now yield to Congressman Hudson to speak further on his efforts and what happens if we fail to come together to pass this reauthorization on time.

[Hudson speaks, yields back]

I yield back.